

**CITY OF CARLSBAD**  
**TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION**  
**STAFF REPORT**

**COMMISSION MEETING OF:** June 6, 2011 **ITEM NO. 6B**

**LOCATION:** La Costa Avenue from El Camino Real to Rancho Santa Fe Road

**INITIATED BY:** City Council

**REQUESTED ACTION:** Approve an interim striping plan for La Costa Avenue from El Camino Real to Rancho Santa Fe Road.

**BACKGROUND:**

Transportation staff has been working on traffic safety improvements to address safety concerns on La Costa Avenue along the roadway section where residential units have direct access with limited corner site distance and vehicle speeds have negatively impacted the quality of life of the residents. These traffic safety improvements are specifically being designed to address issues cited as part of a recent court settlement. At the February 8, 2011 City Council meeting, staff presented a preliminary conceptual plan for La Costa Avenue that proposed:

- traffic signs warning drivers of upcoming residential driveways,
- speed feedback signs to address vehicle speed;
- a painted median prohibiting left turn movements to and from driveways, and
- on-street parking prohibition to improve corner site distance at driveways.

At the February 8 meeting Council approved the installation of the warning signs and speed feedback signs, but rejected the proposed on-street parking prohibition. Staff was directed to pursue some interim striping plan for La Costa Avenue to address access to the residential units on the north side of La Costa Avenue. Staff reviewed the use of a painted median without on-street parking prohibitions and decided to develop another alternative. The main reasons for this conclusion was the potential for low conformance to the left turn prohibitions (i.e., the painted median would not be a self-enforcing solution), and the issues related to limited corner site distance and vehicle speed were not addressed.

As part of a related effort, staff embarked on the La Costa Avenue Improvement Project using a consultant team to “develop a cost effective, community-preferred plan to address traffic speeds and safety on La Costa Avenue in a way that respects the residential character and arterial function of the roadway.” The La Costa Avenue Improvement Project will use a series of public workshops to assist in the development of a vision for La Costa Avenue. This project will work in coordination with city’s general plan update and strive to meet the following core values included in the Envision Carlsbad process:

- neighborhood revitalization, community design and livability
- walking, biking, public transportation and connectivity
- access to recreation and active, healthy lifestyles
- sustainability

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A new conceptual plan was developed that improved corner site distance and retained on-street parking. The new “road diet” alternative reduces La Costa Avenue to one through lane in each direction of traffic, and the existing second through lane of travel would be converted into a Class II bike lane. This road diet conceptual plan does not necessarily reduce vehicle speed, but the resulting one lane of traffic is a precursor to using the traffic measures that would significantly reduce vehicle speed (e.g., roundabouts). Under this proposal, the two-way left turn lane was left in its current configuration allowing left turn movement to and from the residential units. This road diet conceptual plan was presented to City Council at their March 22, 2011 meeting. Council agreed with the general concept and directed staff to present a formal interim striping plan for La Costa Avenue at the June 7, 2011 City Council meeting.

Comments received at the April 28<sup>th</sup> La Costa Avenue Improvement Plan public workshop raised concerns about potential traffic impacts of the proposed road diet striping plan. Staff also heard comments that the road diet alternative be limited to the area of La Costa Avenue where residential units have direct access (i.e., the northern half of La Costa Avenue traveling westbound from Romeria Street to Fairway Lane). Staff also started on the environmental review requirements and determined that California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) supports a project that minimizes traffic impacts. That is, staff should select an alternative that directly resolves the safety issues and minimizes disruptions to traffic. Based on these public comments and CEQA law, staff developed the attached “hybrid” design that retains the current lane configuration eastbound and reduces La Costa Avenue to one through lane westbound between Romeria Street and Fairway Lane. With this approach all roadway sections on La Costa Avenue with direct driveway access would have a bike lane that extends driver visibility approaching traffic and therefore increases the corner site distance. The only section of La Costa Avenue that is altered is the segment with direct access to residential units on the north side of the road. This hybrid alternative is not expected to have any significant traffic impacts based on the preliminary level of service (LOS) results which are attached.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Recommend that City Council approve an interim striping plan that:

- maintains the current eastbound lane configuration on La Costa Avenue between El Camino Real and Rancho Santa Fe Road;
- reduces La Costa Avenue to one lane in the westbound direction of travel west of Romeria Street to west of Fairway Lane by re-striping the existing Number 2 travel lane into a Class II bike lane; and
- maintaining existing on-street parking, but allowing staff to prohibit on-street parking at select locations to improve corner site distance in response to resident requests.

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**NECESSARY CITY COUNCIL ACTION:**

A resolution is expected to be adopted by the City Council to approve the interim striping plan for La Costa Avenue.

Attachments: La Costa Avenue Hybrid Interim Striping Plan, La Costa Avenue LOS Analysis